

TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY



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TRA APPROVES INTRALATA CALLING PLAN; TENNESSEE CONSUMERS TO BENEFIT

NASHVILLE -- Directors of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) unanimously approved a plan today that would give Tennessee customers within BellSouth's calling area a choice of who provides their intraLATA, long-distance telephone calls.

IntraLATA Toll Dialing Parity will provide Tennessee customers with the ability to select the telecommunications carrier of their choice for routing their intraLATA toll calls.

"The choices that are now available to the individual making a Nashville to Knoxville or Chattanooga to Memphis long-distance call are now available to the individual calling long-distance within the same area code," says Joe Werner, Chief of the TRA's Telecommunications Division.

Under the old plan, for example, customers wishing to use a telecommunications carrier other than BellSouth to place an intraLATA, long-distance call would be required to dial a 5-digit access code to complete the call.

Today's decision by the TRA gives consumers the freedom to choose a provider to handle those calls once exclusively handled by BellSouth.

"Today's decision is significant because it brings Tennessee consumers closer to the overall goal of the 1995 Tennessee Telecommunications Act and the 1996 Federal Telecommunications Act, which is greater consumer choice," says the TRA's Werner.

Today's action by the TRA comes on the heels of a recent decision made by the U.S. Supreme Court upholding the February 8, 1999 deadline imposed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for implementing toll dialing parity.

Prior to the issuance of the Supreme Court decision, BellSouth contended before the TRA that BellSouth should not be ordered to implement toll dialing parity on or before February 8, 1999.

Among other things, BellSouth argued that it should not be ordered to implement toll dialing parity in Tennessee until it receives FCC approval to provide in-region, interLATA long-distance services in Tennessee. At this time, BellSouth has not applied for such approval before the FCC.

Listed below is a brief description of the types of calls currently available to consumers:

- **Local** - Are all calls handled by an area's local telephone service provider for which there is no charge i.e. BellSouth.
- **IntraLATA calls** - Or "short, long-distance" calls are long-distance calls made within the same area code. As we have described, these calls were previously handled exclusively by BellSouth. Now consumers are being given a choice of who provides these types of calls.
- **InterLATA calls** - Are the most common types of long-distance calls. These involve calls made from one area code to another i.e. (901) to (615) or (423) to (931) area codes, as examples.

Consumers that are interested in switching intraLATA carriers are being given a 90-day grace period with which to make a change. The waiver period will be in effect from February 8, 1999 to May 8, 1999. After the 90-day period, a fee of \$1.49 will be imposed to switch intraLATA carriers.

Interested consumers can contact the long-distance carrier of their choice.

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